


Wisconsin Works (W-2) Take-up Study

Initial Findings



Background

The Plight of Families in Milwaukee Living Only on Food Stamps, Women and Poverty Public Education Initiative (October 2003)

Updated Statistics, Milwaukee County Board W-2 Monitoring Task Force (July 2004)

W-2 Take-up Study initiated by Department of Children and Families (July 2008)

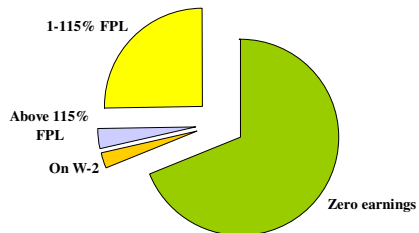


Low-income Families in Wisconsin November 2008

	n	Milwaukee County	Balance of State	Total
Families under 115% FPL	68,681	29.3 %	70.7	100.0 %
Families with zero income	12,608	35.8 %	64.2	100.0 %
Families in W-2 paid placement	6,535	70.1 %	29.9	100.0 %



69% had no earnings 2 months later





Study Objectives

Identify reasons potential participants never apply for W-2

Identify reasons potential participants drop out of the application process

Identify reasons former participants who now appear to meet eligibility criteria do not reapply

To estimate the size and location of the potential participant population



Methodology

Study population:
On FoodShare
Zero earned or unearned income
Minor related child in household
Not on W-2

Mailed survey
stratified random sample
4,000 households

Follow-up telephone interviews

Analysis of administrative data



Sampling and Response Rate

Sample strata	Population	Sample	Returns
Milwaukee, never on	1,811	1,000	178
Milwaukee, once on	2,707	1,000	120
Balance of state, never on	5,529	1,000	207
Balance of state, once on	2,561	1,000	174
Total	12,608	4,000	679

Overall response rate 17.0%



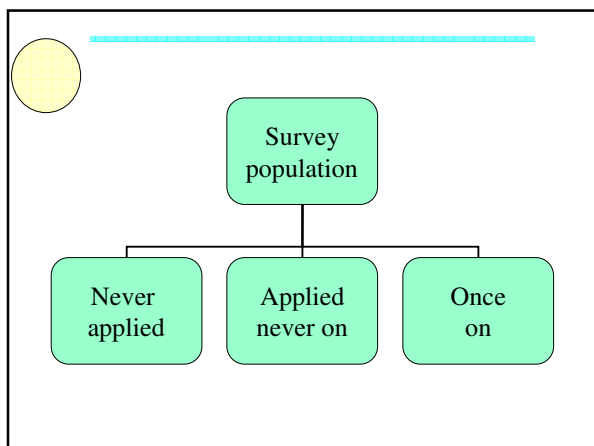
Cautions

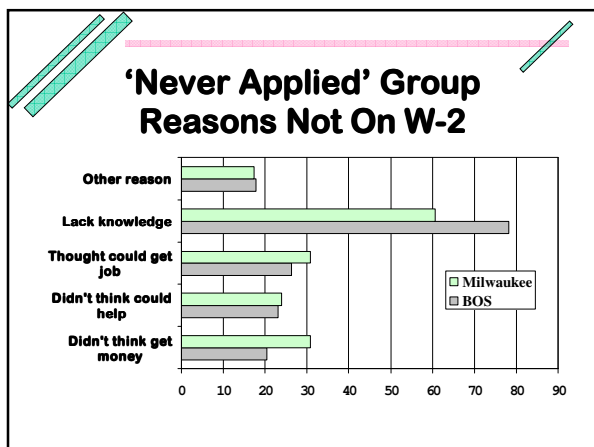
Due to low response rate, respondents may not represent larger population

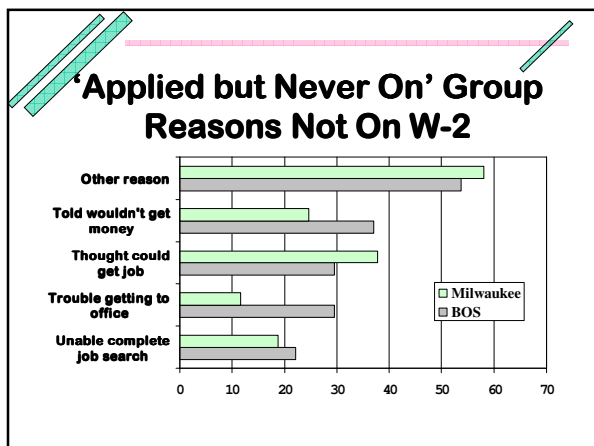
Quantitative analysis (e.g., comparing percentages) must be done with caution

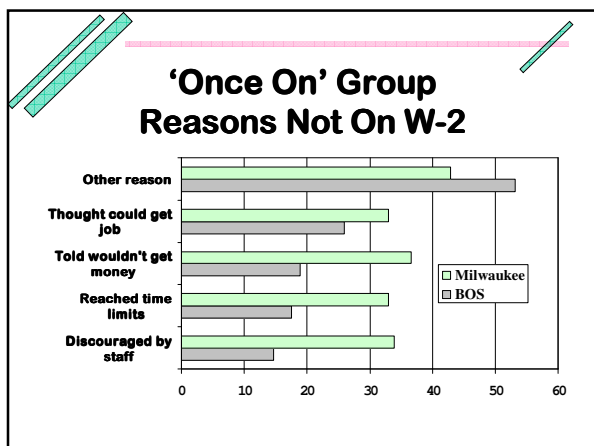
Responses are opinions, not independently verified

Some observations not thoroughly understood





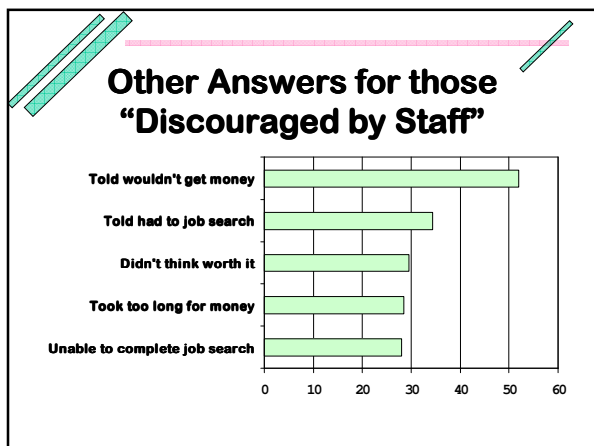




Further Analysis

What does it mean to be “discouraged by staff”?

Analyze “Other Reasons”





Comments on “took too long to get money”

“I went to classes for 2-3 months but I never received any money. So I just applied for food stamps.”

—Respondent 2164, BOS

“I have to find other ways to pay my bills, which takes time from the things I have to do for the W-2 program....”

—Respondent 3080, Milwaukee

“I am at risk of losing my home and need a little help to pay my rent while looking for jobs, not months later. We have children we love and desperately for some help.”

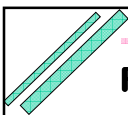
—Respondent 4007, Milwaukee



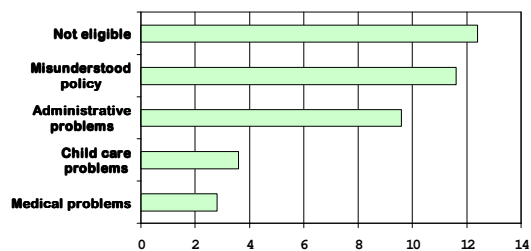
Further Analysis

What does it mean to be “discouraged by staff”?

Analyze “Other Reasons”



For those who Applied “Other Reasons”





Comments on “misunderstood policy”

“Was told by my worker that W-2 is only for those who have severe disabilities.” --Respondent 1129, BOS

“They said to apply for SSI” --Respondent 1146, BOS

“My case worker said we would not qualify for it because it is a 2 parent home that my children live in.

--Respondent 1052, BOS

“Their father owes 4 years of Child Support and I didn’t want to give that up.” --Respondent 1054, BOS



More comments on “misunderstood policy”

“Only have 6 mo. left in 5 yr. limit.... Having baby in March.... Need 6 mo. for baby.” --Respondent 1149, BOS

“I would not be able to come in every day as (my daughter) needs a mandatory 5-6 breathing treatments daily, along with other medications” --Respondent 4096, Milwaukee

“Have no transportation to W-2 office or to get a job. Also I was told I could not get child care benefits”

--Respondent 2020, BOS

“[Name deleted] just got done seeing a phyconurologist for evaluation.... They claim she’s got mental retardation....”

--Respondent 1095, BOS



Comments on “administrative problems”

“My case worker is a real rude lady and doesn’t help me with anything. So figured forget it.” --Respondent 1129, BOS

“In every meeting I had with my worker, she tore me down every time....” --Respondent 1161, BOS

“Please train agents to know the system and be more nice. At least to people who are nice to begin with”

--Respondent 4018, Milwaukee

“I was told by [name deleted] there are homeless shelters in Madison or Rockford IL.” --Respondent 1080, BOS



Language by whether never been on the W-2 program

	Milwaukee County	Balance of State
English	16.1 %	59.5 %
Spanish	26.2	77.7
Hmong	35.2	37.3
Other	12.4	4.9

“Other” includes Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, French, Laotian, Native, Polish, Russian, Somali, Thai, Ukrainian and Vietnamese



Summary of Findings

Potentially-eligible families disproportionately
outside Milwaukee

Largest single problem is lack of knowledge
about the W-2 program

Potential participants think it takes too long to get
cash payment

Potential participants think people who are “work
ready” won’t get a cash payment



Summary of Findings

Some potential participants think the program is
only for disabled people

Some potential participants think the program is
only for people able to work

Some potential participants believed they were
not eligible because they had reached a time limit

A small number of potential participants think the
program takes child support arrearages



Summary of Findings

A small number of potential participants think the program does not exist in their area

Some potential participants had bad experiences with a W-2 agency

Spanish speakers outside Milwaukee disproportionately were never on the W-2 program



Next Steps

Further analysis of urban v BOS differences

Analysis of relationship of services to problems identified in study

Verify some findings with agencies

Finalize report

